John Brown—They Had A Concern

By Jeannette Mather Lord

I

They Had a Concern

On the rolling Iowa prairies between the Cedar and Iowa Rivers, Quaker Ridge was settled during the 1850's by Friends from New England, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. In time the little town of Springdale, situated on the state highway, now known as the Herbert Hoover Highway, emerged as the center of this Quaker community extending through Cedar, Muscatine, and Linn Counties.

In the concern of these Quakers over slavery, Springdale became one of the chief stations on the Underground Railroad in Iowa. This was not a railroad, nor was it underground. It was a route on which lived people whose homes were stations or refuges for escaped slaves and who as engineers and conductors helped the fugitives on their way to the next station toward freedom. It was a source of satisfaction to these Quakers that of the many fleeing slaves reaching Springdale, every one reached Canada and freedom, so carefully was the trip from Springdale mapped out.

I never tired of hearing the older people tell of their part in those stirring years. Aunt Senie, a tiny person, who radiated repose and serenity, had packed more lunches for escaped slaves, it was said, than any other woman in Iowa.

Friend Laurie Tatum, keeper of Traveller's Rest in Springdale and later guardian of the orphaned Herbert Hoover, as a conductor of the Underground Railroad, carried by covered wagon many fugitives across country about twenty-five miles to Mechanicsville. So did Shannon Todd. It was Laurie Tatum, I think, whose wagon was mired in the shifting sands of the Cedar River at Gray's Ford. The combined efforts of himself and his team failed to get the wagon free. The added strength of a stranger also failed to budge the wagon.

"It can't be done," was the stranger's opinion. "The wagon will have to be unloaded."

him: a glass of jelly, an apple, a warm muffler, or a gay kerchief. No memory of my childhood is more vivid than that of this kindly old man trying to make this group of primary children understand the suffering of the mind of the slave even when there was no suffering of body. Dinah, looking up in his master's face, would punctuate the tale with whines, for his master was in distress and to Dinah that was beyond canine endurance.

Uncle Tom's first memory was of hiding in the bushes and seeing the foreman flog his father who was tied to a post. Taking refuge with his mother, he begged to know why white people were masters and the blacks were slaves. She hushed his cries and with tragic earnestness tried to drive all hate and thought of revenge out of her son's heart. They were slaves; acceptance of their lot was a necessity; hatred, rebellion, thoughts of revenge only brought more trouble and suffering, not only to themselves but to their loved ones.

"Mammy," he said, "when I get to be a man I'll not be a slave. I'm bound to run away and be a free man."

Sadly his mother answered, "My child, if you have such thoughts as those never let anyone know it."

This was in Culpepper County, Missouri. After being forty years a slave, Uncle Tom escaped. It was in the fall of the year. He slept in the daytime and traveled at night, following the North Star. Twice he ventured to approach a farmhouse to beg for food. The first time the woman set the dogs on him, and it was difficult to shake them off his trail. The second time the housewife invited him into the kitchen, set a chair for him and went ostensibly for food but in reality to call the men. Uncle Tom, sensing danger, ran out just as the husband with a gun, accompanied by his son, came around the corner of the house. The man shot several times before Uncle Tom reached the shelter of a cornfield in which he eluded them. After that he kept away from people.

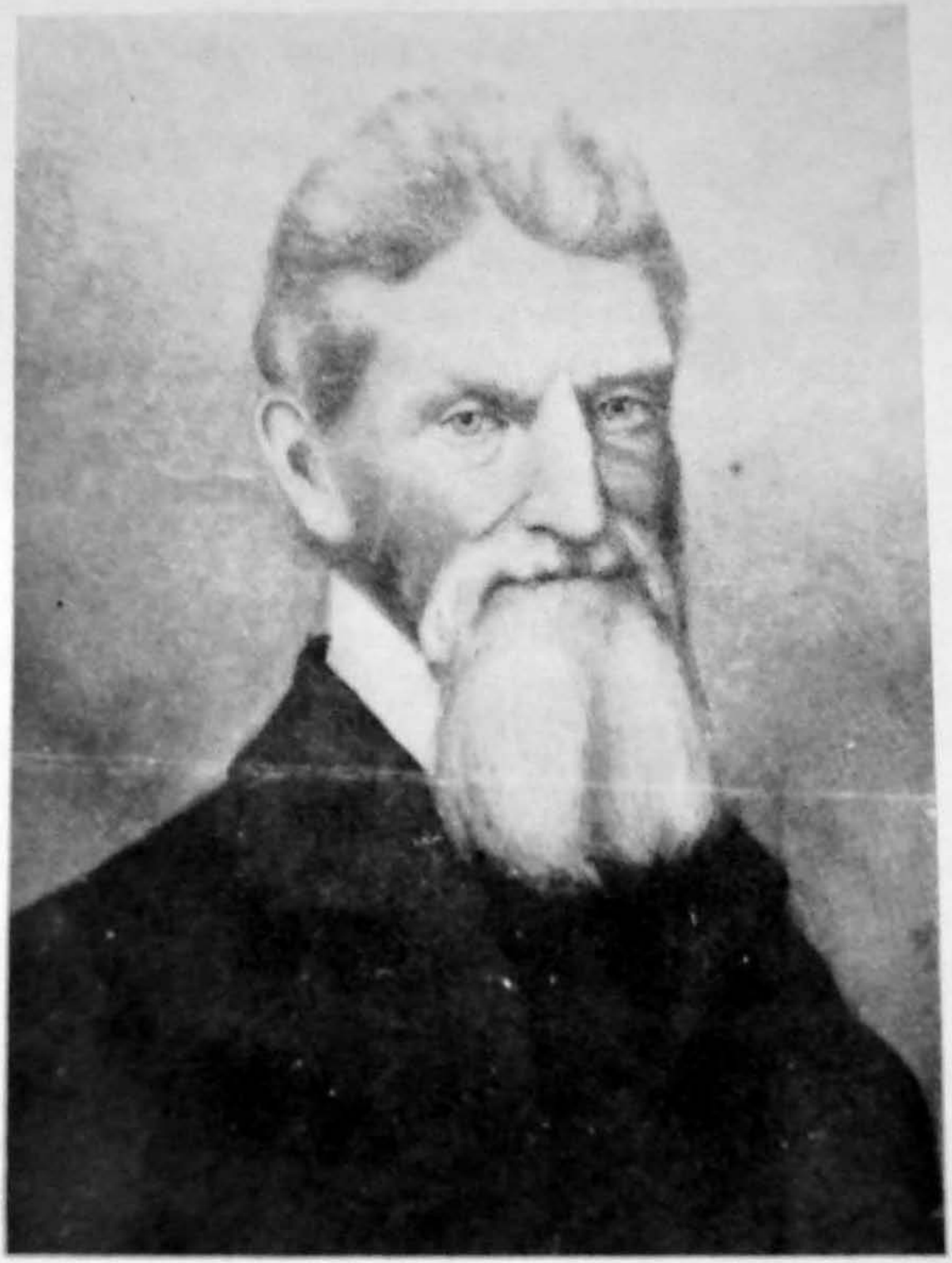
How he found Springdale, I have often wondered. Only when he reached the community where the women wore gray gowns and bonnets and the men broad-brimmed hats did he dare show himself. Rumor, traveling by grapevine in Missouri, had said there would he find safety and be helped on his way.

He arrived late in the year, having had nothing to eat but the raw field corn since leaving his master in Missouri three months before. He had suffered much from the cold. His feet were frozen and in such condition that his boots had to be cut off. Some time was spent in recuperating. He worked as he could to pay for his board and when fit to travel went on his way to Canada and freedom.

It was after the war that Uncle Tom returned to Springdale to live, buying the house just east of the schoolhouse. Of his family I know nothing except that at intervals a daughter would come to live with him. She so vigorously cleaned house and as vigorously used her tongue that before long Uncle Tom would decide that he was happier by himself and the daughter would leave until next summoned. Except for these visits, Uncle Tom lived alone with his cow, sometimes a calf, his chickens, ducks and Dinah. The house was used in common by all. I cannot say that I ever saw the cow in the house, but I have seen the calf in the kitchen drinking from a dish placed on a chair. In the summer the door stood open and the fowls and animals crossed the threshold at will.

On Sabbath, or First Day, Uncle Tom went to Quaker Meeting. Dinah is the only dog I have seen attend divine worship, but inseparable from his master, he would follow him into the pew and never cause any disturbance beyond the excitement among the children as he and Uncle Tom entered. Being prompt was not one of Uncle Tom's virtues. Just as the minister (for by this time the Friends in Springdale had grown progressive enough to have a minister) reached sixthly, or perhaps lastly, when we children had given up hoping for an end and were sure the clock had stopped, Uncle Tom and Dinah would make their way to the empty pew nearest the door. From our family pew we lost no detail of this entrance. Uncle Tom was always a person of romance. We delighted in his kindly face and picturesque figure in his silver gray suit, bright bandanna, soft broad-brimmed gray hat, showing beneath it a fringe of white hair. He never took off his hat in meeting except during a prayer, not even in the long silence following the sermon.

At the time of the early Friends in England, to remove a hat in the presence of others was an act of servility or, at least, a recognition of inferiority. Believing that all men are equal in



John Brown

the sight of God, the early Friend wore his hat in the presence of all people, even the king and other high officials. He wore it in court and in meeting, but he removed it when he prayed. It was definitely Quakerly for Uncle Tom to wear his hat during the service and symbolic of his recognized equality with his neighbors. Here no one wished Uncle Tom to pay "hat honor."

When my mother had typhoid fever, every morning before breakfast Uncle Tom, having walked a mile and a half to our home, known as Evergreens, would appear at the kitchen door to inquire how the "missus" was. Mother gave orders to the cook to invite him into the kitchen for breakfast, but he refused even a cup of coffee.

On our way to town, we frequently found Uncle Tom out on the "horseblock" watching for us. Would we stop on our return for a basket of fruit, always ripe before ours?

One day he questioned Mother on how to raise ducks. This was a surprising inquiry from one so successful. Sensing his seriousness, Mother told him in great detail her understanding of the problem. He asked many questions. Finally fully satisfied that Mother knew how to care for ducks, he asked permission to present us children with a duck and her newly hatched brood. The ducks thrived and because of their unusually brilliant coloring were our delight.

The years accumulated for Uncle Tom. The time came when he could no longer care for himself. Even now he could not live with his daughter. He sold his tiny place and, with the proceeds and his savings, went to the county farm as a paying guest. He was happy there, living to a ripe old age, full of quiet dignity, a respected and self-supporting member of the community. Once a year he would receive an invitation to visit Uncle William for a week-end to attend again our meeting where he would see all his friends.

In the Springdale Cemetery is his grave with the inscription on the tombstone:

Thomas W. Jenkins
Called as a slave
Richard Lewis
Died Dec. 9, 1902
Aged 83 years old

II

We Have No Use for Thy Guns

In October of 1856, John Brown came to Iowa City, Iowa, the home of the Kansas National Committee for Iowa, to see William Penn Clarke, Dr. Jesse Bowen, Colonel Samuel C. Trowbridge, Iowa City's first sheriff, and other abolitionists, who from now on, could always be depended upon to supply funds needed for forwarding passengers on the Underground Railroad. This ran across Iowa with stations at Tabor, Lewis, Des Moines, Grinnel, Iowa City, West Liberty, Springdale, Tipton, Dewitt, and Clinton. Salem in Southeastern Iowa was also an important station.

On this occasion he visited for the first time the Friends' community, east of Iowa City. The story ran that weary and travel-worn, John Brown stopped his mule in West Branch at Travel's Rest, an inn kept by James Townsend, saying to his host, "Have you ever heard of John Brown of Kansas?" Townsend, knowing Brown through Iowa City abolitionists, took a piece of chalk from his vest pocket and marked a large X on Brown's hat, another on his back and a third on the flank of his mule to indicate that Brown was to be a guest on the house. Then he said, "Friend, put thy animal in that stable and walk into the house. Thee is surely welcome."[1]

In the early winter of 1857-'58 again Brown was in Springdale. With him were ten of his supporters and also some slaves whom they were helping to freedom. Unsuccessfully an auction was held in an attempt to sell off the wagons and teams, used for transporting rifles and pikes from Tabor, Iowa. They had walked from Tabor in twenty-five days, avoiding settlements on the way. My father has described Brown's patriarchal appearance as he stood in the midst of his company that day—slightly under six feet in height with stooping shoulders, gray hair and long flowing beard of snowy whiteness, in all appearances an old man, but one commanding attention, confidence and respect. He never laughed.

The auction was a failure. Cash was scarce because of the panic of 1857. William Maxson, a spiritualist, not a Quaker

[1]Many of the older Friends in the community used the Quaker "thou" in my childhood. Others used the "thee" of the Quaker vernacular which later came into general use as the subject as well as the object of a verb. Both are used as they were used in the stories.

but long a member of a train crew of the Underground Railroad, living in the rather isolated North Liberty community, about three miles northeast of Springdale, agreed to give board for the winter to Brown and his men in exchange for his teams and wagons as might seem just and fair—one and a half dollars a week for each man, not including laundry and extra candles.

The Maxson house was an attractive one, built in 1839 on the edge of the timber, on the site of the first white man's cabin built on this side of the Cedar River. Constructed of stone, it was overlaid with plaster and was quite palatial for these days. The house, 24 x 38 feet with an annex 16 x 20, had five good-sized rooms on the ground floor. Its walls were a foot thick, its laths of split native oak. The floors were also of oak and the woodwork was of black walnut. I remember the design of the molding and the carved corners of the window frames, for my sense of fitness was hurt when I saw trophy hunters tear off lovely pieces, leaving great gaping holes.

Around the fireplace in the parlor, called "the great room," were held the councils and here plans were laid. Opening off this room was a smaller room used by Brown as a bedroom and office. The big living-room and long dining-room-kitchen were also given over to Brown's men. A steep narrow stairs led to a garret where there was just enough head room for a man to stand erect under the ridge pole. This served as sleeping quarters for the ten men.

Maria Todd, later the wife of Elza Maxson, told me that she lived with William and Delilah Maxson while Brown and his men were there. She and the Maxson family shared the cellar with the fleeing slaves that winter. It was a large cellar, underneath the whole house, designed and used as a station on the Underground Railroad. The open stairway came down from the dining-room-kitchen, dividing the part under the main house into two large rooms, each of which had its huge fireplace. Back of these rooms extended a dark area never fully explored by me. The cooking was done over the fireplaces.

Today the house is still spoken of as beautiful. "The big east door with its dignified casement, the nice proportion of the house, its unusual finish of gravel, not unlike modern stucco, give occasion to wonder at the pioneer settlers who builded it."

The above was written after the old house had fallen into ruins and was to be pulled down. Three architects were sent to make blue-prints of the old building. These were to be deposited in the national files in Washington, D. C.

In my childhood, the right-hand fireplace in the cellar had fallen in, leaving a big jagged hole in the foundation. When showing visitors this cellar we children anticipated the moment when, stepping off the stairs, Mother would say, "This cellar was considered one of the safest of all the stations of the Underground Railroad." Not infrequently would come the expected question from the guest who had taken a hurried look about, "Did the railroad come in there?" pointing to the hole where was once a fireplace.

We never missed a visit to the cellar and we were always at Mother's elbow as she pointed out the strength of this refuge. Many a time officers of the law, slave masters and bloodhounds were confident that the fugitive slaves had been tracked to that cellar. Never were they refused the admittance demanded; never was force used to keep them from securing their quarry. But courageous as these men undoubtedly were the desire of regaining possession of the most valuable of slaves diminished as they stood in the dining-room at the open door, staring down an open staircase with the light streaming down from above. Below on either side stretched the impenetrable darkness of the cellar. A fugitive slave was a desperate man, protected by the darkness, while his would-be captor faced the necessity of descending that stairway in full light, an easy target. Although the slave's master sometimes lingered in the community for a week or two, fortunately for the record of the community, no attempt was ever made to enter that cellar.

The names of the men who made up John Brown's party became household names in the homes of the Quakers. They were always listed as follows: Brown's son, Owen Brown; Richard Realf, an Englishman; John Henri Kagi, correspondent for the *New York Post;* Aaron D. Stephens, known as Colonel Whipple; John Edwin Cook, later a brother-in-law of the governor of Indiana; Luke F. Parsons, 22 years old and already a fighter seasoned in the Kansas Border War; William H. Leeman, only eighteen; Charles Plummer Tidd; Charles Moffat and a fugitive

slave, Richard Richardson, from Lexington, Missouri, who had joined them in southern Iowa.

These men became part of the community. They brought many new interests. My father attended the mock legislature held twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, in the big west room of the Maxson house and later, because of the crowds, in the brick schoolhouse, which subsequently became the home of Moses Varney. This legislature followed parliamentary law and proceeded with motions and debates. From Father's account, I judge that all questions of interest of the day were discussed: politics, slavery and warfare, political and civil rights of the negro, college education and civil rights of women, banking laws, prohibitory liquor laws, mechanics, theology, spiritualism, and natural philosophy. The Maxsons and Stephens were spiritualists. Brown kept his men supplied with good reading, especially with biographies of great men, beginning with *Plutarch's Lives*. Consequently they had a wide range of interests, wider than that of Brown himself. He was a crusader with one dominating idea. He talked only of religion and the evils of slavery, and he was indeed a convincing debater. Realf, Kagi, Cook, and Coppoc were brilliant in oratory.

Rising at five in the morning the boarders at Mr. Maxson's spent the forenoons in military studies and drilling with wooden swords or pikes and in maneuvering in the open space in front of the house, led by Stephens who had had previous United States Army experience. As a child I have trod the paths worn by these men in their drilling, still distinct forty years afterwards in an otherwise green lawn. I was awed by the fact that these men had willingly given their lives, not in self-defense but deliberately in order to help others gain freedom.

The evenings were given over to reading, writing letters, studying shorthand, taught by Kagi, and debating.

The decision to winter here in Springdale was an excellent one in John Brown's judgment, for this community was well known for its concern against slavery and against war. It was several miles off the railroad and far from Harper's Ferry and

Coming into the community with escaping slaves who needed help, John Brown and the Quakers met as co-workers in a common cause to which they were completely and devotedly dedicated. Without reserve they applied themselves to hiding the fugitives and finding means of passing on these "packages" to safety and to Canada. There would be time for the Quakers to consider John Brown later.

In a matter of days after the establishment of Brown's men at Maxsons, suspicions were aroused as word spread of maneuvers and military drill on the lawn in front of the Maxson house. The Quakers knew of the Kansas Border War and the Potawotomie massacre. Their disapproval was shown by the Quaker who said to Brown, "Thou art welcome to tarry among us but we have no use for thy guns." The Quakers stood ready to work with Brown in aiding fugitive slaves, but no sanction would they give to any plan of violence.

When the Quakers came to know John Brown they found him as trustworthy, honest, and God-fearing as had their friends on the Kansas National Committee for Iowa. They responded as did Thoreau and Sanborn in Concord, Gerrit Smith in New York, T. W. Higginson, George L. Stearns, Theodore Parker of New England and other abolitionists. Brown was a man who inspired confidence. Such was my father's first impression of him.

Historians have said that "from 1850 on, he (Brown) talked constantly and openly of carrying the war into Africa," but in Springdale he was discreetly silent. Elza Maxson, who went East in 1859, when summoned by Brown, emphasized to me Brown's determination to avoid war or do any harm to any one except those opposing him when he was working to free the slaves. Brown stated that he would have nothing "to do with any war, unless it was a war of liberty."

Well liked, Brown's men were welcome guests for an evening in the homes of the community. Aaron Stephens, Brown's drillmaster, was a frequent visitor at the home of Moses Varney. His daughter, Anna Varney Phelps, would tell of sitting on Stephens' knee while, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he would sing in his beautiful tenor, "Will they miss me at home, Mother? Will they miss me?"

Narcissa Macy Smith stated that Brown's character was irreproachable. He was an ardent prohibitionist; neither did he use tobacco, nor strong and profane language. "As a man thinketh, so is he," she quoted from Proverbs.

Henry D. Thoreau in *A Plea for Captain John Brown* writes that he himself had heard him (Brown) state that "In his camp, he permitted no profanity; no man of loose morals was suffered to remain there, unless, indeed, as a prisoner of war. 'I would rather have small-pox, yellow fever, and cholera all together than a man without principles!' "

Father, a consistent non-resistant, expressed his faith in and high regard for Brown as a man, telling of the path worn by his feet as he, when at the Maxson home, went without fail morning and evening to pray, to communicate with God and to meditate alone. The Quaker receives strength by withdrawing as in silence and solitude one comes close to God. So did John Brown. He had the love which casts out fear.

Only when visitors questioned did we of my generation hear of Brown, the avenger, smiting the enemies of slavery in Kansas. The emphasis was on the common concern to forward the freedom of the slaves and their confidence in Brown as a man of integrity, kindliness, sincerity, and spirituality.

Some would question: "Did not the Quakers "wink" at the military drill and Brown's plans, giving aid on the side?" To this Mother's answer was an emphatic "No." The "Meeting" were united in their testimony for peace, she would say, in their efforts to free the slaves and in their disapproval of the use of force by Brown. They spoke their minds frankly and forcefully at every opportunity without avail.

Yet, Mother would continue, when John Brown stated that he felt he was called by the Almighty God to deliver the nation from Slavery, and that his mission was "divinely appointed", the Friends could not doubt him. With their belief in "The Inner Light" and "that of God in everyman" the Quakers expect one's conduct to be in agreement with the inner revelation. The individual must assume full responsibility for his spiritual decisions. Hence they responded to John Brown with an unwillingness to judge him or to set themselves up against him. As Brown walked among them, they shared the burden on his

soul, the great weight of the shackles of the thousands of men in bondage.

It is one of the striking inconsistencies of human nature that the Quakers, strongly non-resistant themselves, loved this man whose dedication to the cause of freedom and whose hatred of slavery had led him mistakenly, in their opinion, down the path of violence. Although they could not agree with his methods and thought his judgment faulty, such was his character, commanding their confidence, esteem and affection, that he and his men wintered unmolested in their midst, making preparations, the goal unknown to the Quakers, for his memorable raid on Harper's Ferry.

John Painter, later the founder of Pasadena, California, the only Quaker known to have had knowledge of Brown's plan at this time, labored in vain to dissuade him. However, Father would remind us that the Quakers were not alone in this trust in Brown, for Parker, Higginson, Stearns, and Gerrit Smith sent him funds not knowing that they were to be used to attack the arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

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For only short intervals was Brown himself at Maxson's during the winter. It is said that, before leaving his followers, in January, 1858, to raise money in the East, he disclosed to some of them his plans in more detail and for the first time Harper's Ferry was mentioned. In the community only Maxson and Painter knew what was afoot.

By April Brown returned with funds and gave orders for the expedition to start. By now Moses Varney may have known something of the plans. Each of his men wrote his name on the plaster wall of the "great room" of the Maxson house. In my childhood, the pencil marks had grown so faint that no full name could be traced out by my searching finger.

When Brown talked to Thomas James for the last time, James said, "Thee must be careful or thee will get a rope around thy neck."

To this Brown answered, "Yes, I expect it."

John Painter said, "Friend, I can't give thee money to buy powder and lead but here's $20. toward thy expenses."

The men went from house to house to say "Farewell". In the crowd which gathered to see them off, there were few dry eyes.

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Nearly a year had passed before John Brown came again to Springdale. All were surprised when, 1859, Feb. 25, he appeared with some of his men and eleven or twelve slaves from Missouri. He had taken them safely through part of Kansas and across Iowa while the agents of the Fugitive Slave Law endeavored to capture Brown and the caravan. The government was offering $250. for his capture and the state of Kansas was offering $3,000.

Quickly the Friends found secure hiding places for the slaves. On March 10, the negroes traveled by box-car from West Liberty to Chicago. To pay their expenses a public sale had been held to auction off the mules and wagons, all of which had probably been commandeered.

It is told that when a mule was offered for sale, Brown stepped forward saying, "Gentlemen, the mule is all right but there is a slight defect in title."

Another story tells of John Painter saying, "Friend Brown, I understand that thee wishes to sell thy mules and I wish to buy one."

"Yes, they are for sale. How much do you think they are worth?"

"I think," said Painter, "they ought to bring one hundred twenty five dollars apiece."

"The mules are all right," replied Brown, "only for one thing and that is they have the habit of occasionally kicking. I think they should bring only one hundred dollars."

"Very well," agreed Painter, "I will pay one hundred dollars for this mule and I donate twenty-five dollars to the expenses of the expedition."

After the sale Brown did not linger but hurried on to Chicago and Canada.

This was not a quiet interval in that usually serene Quaker community. It would have been a severe test to that non-

resistant Society if a rumored attempt to arrest John Brown and capture the caravan had materialized. Great was the relief when the fugitives were on their way safely.

As the summer of 1859 advanced, here and there a boy in the community went on a trip to Ohio ostensibly to visit relatives.

Elza Maxson had planned to be with Brown at the critical time but, due to the uncertainty of dates, news of the attack reached him as he was on his way to the East. He was too late to have any part in it. Even in his old age, in talking with me, he showed the same firm belief in and high regard for John Brown. The attack had been a mistake. Fate had stepped in and prevented him from personally having a part in that chapter of history. Gladly would he have given his life for the cause. It was with resignation that he accepted his escape from the gallows at Harper's Ferry. Fate had willed it so. A Friend would have said that God had willed it so.

The two Coppoc boys, Edwin and Barclay, received summons to meet Brown at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, at the earliest possible moment.

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After their departure, the days drowsed through the summer in Springdale. The quietness of autumn was broken by the startling and terrible news of Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry —news which brought grief, sleeplessness and deep soul searching in the long night watches.

All the world knows of the raid on Harper's Ferry. If Brown had been killed during the attack, he would have been forgotten by now, I have heard Mother say. But his greatness came upon him in his prison days in Charlestown, Virginia, later to be included in West Virginia, when, during the war, that state was formed. Brown acknowledged his mistakes. He fought the plea of insanity put forward by well-meaning friends. When Samuel C. Pomeroy, long identified with the anti-slavery movement, later a senator from Kansas, told him that friends wished to plan an escape, Brown refused the help saying, "I am worth infinitely more to the cause to die than to live."

"God's Angry Man" he has been called by those who regarded him as a man filled with the wrath of God, willing to smite the enemies of the Lord with the sword and to break in pieces the oppressor and destroy the wicked as would a Hebrew prophet in the Old Testament. However, he is remembered as one who, on his last night on earth, asked that his religious attendants at his execution should be "poor little bareheaded, barelegged, ragged slave children and their old gray-haired slave mother." Instead guards and soldiers met him on the porch that Dec. 2, 1859.

As he saw the streets filled with armed soldiers, he commented, "I had no idea that Governor Wise considered my execution so important."

Riding to the gallows, seated on his own coffin, he said, "This is a very beautiful country. I never had the pleasure of seeing it before."

There was no flinching as he stood on the scaffold. A second later his body hung between heaven and earth and his soul was marching on.

As the Quakers in Springdale learned the sequence of events and realized the full significance of the fact that Brown and his men had drilled and prepared and planned for the attack on Harper's Ferry in their midst, they made haste to restate their testimony for peace. Three weeks after the raid, at the Monthly Meeting "a large and representative committee" was appointed to investigate the report that there "appears to be an impression abroad that the Friends in this neighborhood have improperly encouraged a war spirit." Joel Bean, Henry Rowntree, Israel Negus, Laurie Tatum, James Schooley, and Samuel Macy were among those who served on this committee. They reported to the Monthly Meeting, December 7, 1859:

> We have endeavored to consider the subject confided to us in all its bearings and are united in the conclusion, that any publication (in the way of defense) on the part of the Mo Mee (Monthly Meeting) is unnecessary . . . . we believe our principals [sic] of peace were never dearer to most of our members than now.

However this did not close the chapter for the Springdale Community, for Edwin Coppoc faced execution for treason and Barclay was a fugitive in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

III

Wayward Tendencies

In mid-summer, July 25, 1859, in the large, square, frame, farmhouse on the eastern outskirts of the small town of Springdale in Cedar County, Iowa, Barclay Coppoc told his mother that he and his brother, Edwin, were starting for Ohio.

"Ohio?" questioned his mother. "I believe that thou art going with Old Brown. When thou gettest a halter round thy neck wilt thou think of me?"

"We cannot die in a better cause," replied Barclay.

It was his Quaker mother, Ann Coppoc Raley, a woman of rare intelligence, a strong abolitionist, who had taught her sons their hatred of slavery. Many a slave had been harbored in their home.

However both boys had developed "wayward tendencies", disturbing to their mother and the "meeting". Edwin took up dancing. The Monthly Meeting dealt with him in the "spirit of restoring love." As Edwin did not condemn his actions he was disowned by the meeting. There is also an entry in the minutes of the Monthly Meeting that Barclay Coppoc had used strong language and struck a man in anger. Barclay gave the "meeting" satisfaction and the complaint was "passed by". Now both brothers had a concern. Following the prompting of the "Inner Light" they threw themselves into the struggle against slavery with John Brown whom they went to meet in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. They were the only Friends who were summoned and Edwin had been "put out of the meeting".

In October of 1859 John Brown gathered his men at the Kennedy Farm in Maryland five miles above Harper's Ferry preparing for his raid on the arsenal in order to obtain arms. "There were six or seven men in Brown's party who . . . were ignorant of the plan of operation until Sunday morning, October 16. Among this number were Edwin and Barclay Coppoc," stated John E. Cook in his confessions made in prison.

About eight o'clock that evening Brown called his men together, saying, "Men, get on your arms. We will proceed to the Ferry."

Early the next morning they heard firing in the valley which increased sometime after noon. Late in the day, arming themselves well with rifles, they started down toward the Ferry. Soon they met Charles Plummer Tidd and later John E. Cook through whom they learned that Brown's Band was completely surrounded and nothing could be done to help them. As lingering in the neighborhood would surely cost them their lives, the only course left them was flight into the mountains. Traveling by night only, hunted by men and dogs, they made their way through an alerted countryside, often having only the hard mature corn from the fields for food.

Edwin Coppoc, the only white man unwounded in the attack, was taken prisoner with John Brown. A newspaper reporter, astonished at his youth and honest face, exclaimed, "What are you doing in this place?"

Governor Wise, also impressed by the boy, said, "You look like too honest a man to be found in this band of robbers."

"But Governor, we look upon you as the robbers," answered Coppoc.

Nine days later he was brought before the court chained to John Brown. The day after Brown's sentence, his trial ended with the verdict that he was to be hanged on December 16.

Asked if he had anything to say to the court, he stated that the charges of treason against the State of Virginia were not true for he had never made war upon it. He had never conspired to overthrow the government of the state. The purpose of the band was to run off slaves to a free state and liberate them. This is against your laws but he had never committed murder. When attacked in the engine house, there was no way out but to fight a little. If anyone was killed there it was a fair fight. He had killed no one. He had broken Virginia's laws, but the punishment for his offence should be very different from the verdict given.

During his imprisonment he wrote to his mother that all had turned out differently from expectations. He had seen his folly too late. He would try to meet death as every man should, though it would have been a great comfort to die at home. He regretted that he had had no other choice than to fight. A Quaker at heart, he was sorry that he had ever raised a gun.

Hundreds came to see him in prison and many exhibited sympathy. He was spoken of as an exemplary prisoner. As he had killed no one, Governor Wise made a fruitless recommendation for a commutation of sentence to life imprisonment.

An escape was attempted by Coppoc and Cook who had been captured when he left the party in the mountains to buy food. With knives they cut a hole in the wall which their bed covered. By notching their knives, they made a saw, with which they hacked through their chains. The night before their execution they dropped 15 feet to the courtyard and mounted the wall. As the guard on the wall, whom they hoped to find friendly, threatened to bayonet them, they had no other choice than to walk back to deliver themselves to the astonished jailer.

Twelve hours of life remained. Thomas Winn, the postmaster at Springdale, was with Edwin until the last but he could not watch the execution. Contrary to plan, Coppoc's body was not taken back to Iowa but was buried in the Friend's Burying Ground at Winona, Columbiana County, in Ohio, taken up and buried again, twelve feet down with tons of rock above it for protection, in the Hope Burying Ground in his birthplace, Salem, Ohio.

The day of the execution was a day of sorrow for all Springdale. Mary Ann Montgomery was sent to spend part of the terrible day with the grieving mother. Ann Coppoc Raley greeted her with, "I'm glad thou art come. Edwin was hanged at one o'clock today."

After a time she went back to Ohio to visit the grave of her son. While there she wrote her sister, who had lost a son as he attempted to aid fugitive slaves from Missouri: "On thinking the matter over, I see that there might be a sorrow even greater than ours. Yes, if our sons had gone into some horse-theft, murder, or robbery, and had been shot or slain in the enterprise, it would have been countless times worse, but going against our will, still the motive for it has to be looked at. They went to liberate their fellowmen, not for their own advantage."

Eliza Maxson has shown me an ambrotype of himself which he had given to Edwin Coppoc. Twenty years after his death, Eliza found this ambrotype in the deserted Coppoc house. Tak-

ing it from its case he found a message which must have been written in prison: "Dear Elza, farewell," signed Edwin Coppoc. A likeness of Edwin stood on a little stand in our library at Evergreens beside a likeness of George Fox, the Quaker saint and founder. Edwin was almost a relative for my aunt by marriage was his younger half sister.

For many weeks Barclay Coppoc was a fugitive with bloodhounds and officers of the law at his heels. Not until the day after Edwin's execution did he, gaunt and thin as a skeleton, arrive at his Springdale home.

Several young men in the neighborhood united to form a twenty-four hour a day guard for Barclay. In addition Elza Maxson lived with him and became his shadow. It was his duty, he said, to greet all visitors that came to the house and, if necessary, give Barclay opportunity for hiding. A carriage would drive up to the gate or a stranger would come on horseback. Elza would go out to meet the guest. As the whole country was aflame with excitement over the Harper's Ferry raid, many came hunting the man who had escaped. Some were self-appointed searchers. Since they had no papers, they could, with firmness, wisdom and tact, be induced to depart. Others had been properly appointed by the government of Virginia but did not have extradition papers. These also could be tactfully disposed of, particularly as more than one officer of the law went through the form of demanding Coppoc and the right to search, but was at heart glad to report back to their Virginia superiors that the task, distasteful to them and having no legal authority, had been executed without success. Barclay now went heavily armed. In this crisis the overseers of the Friends Preparative Meeting called on him as action on their part seemed necessary. On January 10, of 1860, the report was made to the Monthly Meeting that "Barclay Coppoc had neglected attendance of our religious meetings and is in the practice of carrying arms." As he refused to heed the "spirit of restoring love" he was separated from the meeting.

One day in January, 1860, there came to Governor Kirkwood's office in Des Moines, by now the capital of Iowa, a Mr. Camp from Virginia, who demanded extradition papers for Barclay Coppoc. When General Ed Wright, then representing

Cedar County in the Legislature, on this day entered the Governor's office with Representative Galbraith, the Governor attempted to drop the discussion in their presence. However they heard the pompous, gruff, self-important Virginian retort, "I don't give a _____. You have refused to honor the requisition." Wright and Galbraith withdrew immediately. Within two hours a swift horseman was on his 165 mile ride to Springdale carrying a warning to Coppoc that Iowa was no longer a safe refuge.

The requisition papers were found by Governor Kirkwood to be faulty in four details. Until these could be rectified no extradition papers could be issued. While waiting for corrected papers from Virginia, Mr. Camp prudently lingered in Muscatine, a Mississippi River town to the east. During this time Coppoc could not be persuaded to flee.

However when the proper papers were known to have been honored by Governor Kirkwood, John Painter drove Barclay Coppoc, disguised with a false beard, accompanied by Thaddeus Maxson, brother of Elza, through a furious snowstorm twenty-five miles to Mechanicsville to catch a train for Chicago. There they made their way through a raging blizzard to the home of a negro who collected funds from other negroes in the city for Coppoc's flight. When Mr. Camp arrived in Springdale with the proper papers and the sheriff, their quarry had flown.

From now on Coppoc returned home for only hasty visits. He was forever on the move, never knowing security again. At the outbreak of the war, he enlisted in the Union Army and served as First Lieutenant in the 3rd Kansas Infantry. With the authorization of his superior officer, he returned to Springdale where he secured eleven recruits. The train carrying these young men to Kansas was wrecked by the burning of the supports of the bridge, 80 feet high, over the Platte River. Barclay Coppoc was among the dead.

There were those who rejoiced over his death. There were those who announced that it was only because Coppoc was a passenger that the train had been wrecked. When the news reached Springdale, the questions were at once asked: How

did anyone in the South know that Coppoc was on that train? Was there an informer in their midst?

Mr. Maxson had a new neighbor, a stranger in the community. A Southerner? Perhaps. No one knew. Mr. Crew, another neighbor, coming home from the village met the newcomer. I have heard his daughter tell that he reined in his horse with the greeting, "Neighbor, I know nothing about you before you moved into our neighborhood. I do not wish to imply anything. I have no opinion whatsoever. But there has been a gathering of men in town discussing the fate of Barclay Coppoc. They suspect that some one in our midst gave information leading to the wrecking of that train. Suspicion has settled on you. They are coming out this way in a body. If you are innocent, all is well. If not, there is trouble ahead." Without a word the newcomer turned his horse about and rode away—out of the community, never even sending a message to his family.